



Manifesto Watch

European Parliament
Elections

May 2019



Introduction



Credit: Debating Europe

Only a few weeks after our Local Elections we are now just a few days away from the 2019 European Elections on Thursday 23rd May. In this document the Human Rights Consortium has reviewed the manifesto pledges and Brexit policies of all 11 candidates who have put themselves forward for election across Northern Ireland.

This resource will highlight several issues related to human rights and equality across the available manifestos and policies for each candidate.

With the absence of the Northern Ireland Assembly and Executive and ongoing disagreements continuing at Westminster Parliament regarding the Brexit process, the European Parliament Elections are a unique opportunity for Northern Ireland to have its voice amplified amid the Brexit discussions.

As important facets of the Consortium's work, this document examines candidate plans and commitments in relation to Brexit, a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland, the European Convention of Human Rights and the UK Human Rights Act. Additionally, this resource will examine candidate and party attitudes on other issues relevant to Brexit and human rights such as EU funding, equality, anti-discrimination, workers' rights, environmental issues and climate change.

EUROPEAN ELECTION CANDIDATES 2019			
TUV	Jim Allister	UKIP	Robert Hill
SF	Martina Anderson	UUP	Danny Kennedy
GRN	Clare Bailey	ALL	Naomi Long
CON	Amandeep Bhogal	IND	Neil McCann
DUP	Diane Dodds	IND	Jane Morrice
SDLP	Colum Eastwood		

Credit: UTV¹

In total, there are 11 candidates running in this election, with nine parties represented and two independents running.

As the local elections were just a few weeks ago, and it was uncertain if the European Elections were going to go ahead, some candidates have not yet launched, or even created, new manifestos for the European Parliament Elections. The lack of clear information on the manifesto pledges of all parties is concerning as the election is only a few days away.

If a party has not released a European Election manifesto, no information will be provided for that candidate outside of their stance on Brexit. Of course, most candidates will have views or party policies on the matters discussed in this resource, but without an accessible European Election manifesto it was not possible to include them in this document.

European Manifestos that have been made available to the public can be found by clicking on the name of the candidate.

¹ For more information about candidates, see <https://www.rte.ie/news/2019/0513/1049098-european-elections-2019-northern-ireland/>

European Parliament Election Candidates 2019

Party	Candidate	Manifesto Available to Public	Brexit Stance
	Jim Allister	✗	Leave – Hard Brexit / No Deal
	Martina Anderson	✓	Remain - Special Status for NI Needed
	Clare Bailey	✗	Remain – Support People’s Vote
	Amandeep Bhogul	✗	Leave - Split views among members
	Diane Dodds	✓	Leave – Opposes backstop
	Colum Eastwood	✗	Remain – Special Status for NI Needed
	Robert Hill	✓	Leave – Hard Brexit
	Danny Kennedy	✓	Leave – NI as UK Gateway to EU
	Naomi Long	✓	Remain – supports a People’s Vote
	Neil McCann	✗	Remain - within reformed EU
	Jane Morrice	✗	Remain – no other information

Brexit

At the time of writing, not all parties have launched a manifesto for the European Parliament elections, however, their stance on Brexit is relatively clear. The **DUP, TUV, Conservatives, UUP and UKIP** are backing Brexit; albeit to varying degrees. The **DUP** and **TUV** are backing a “hard” Brexit where Northern Ireland is not treated as a backstop or given any special status.

The **DUP** argue that the ‘economic and constitutional integrity of the United Kingdom must be maintained’². In addition, the **DUP** also argue against a “hard border” between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland but will not support any new trade barriers within the United Kingdom.

The **TUV** believe the Common Travel Agreement will not be threatened but that a Withdrawal Agreement cannot, under any circumstance, create a “Temporary Customs Union” between Northern Ireland and the EU; as this would ‘go against the integrity of the United Kingdom’³.

The **UUP** are supporting Brexit but are opposed to a no-deal Brexit; any new borders between the UK and Ireland; a second referendum or a border poll⁴. They believe that a backstop is a huge threat to the Union of the United Kingdom and that it would undermine the constitutional status of Northern Ireland and The Belfast/Good Friday Agreement (loc. cit.).

UKIP are supporting a “hard Brexit” of leaving the EU ‘under the policy of unilateral and unconditional withdrawal’⁵. There is no mention of Northern Ireland, the border with the Republic of Ireland or any special status. Instead, they are campaigning to offer the EU ‘tariff-free trade, or WTO terms’ (loc. cit.). If any **UKIP** MEPs are elected, they have pledged to ‘vote against all EU legislation ... and they will only vote for [sic] amendments to legislation where powers are returned to the nation state’ (loc. cit.).

The **Conservatives** have not released an EU Election Manifesto, but their candidates across the UK are a mix of both remain and leave supporters. The Conservative candidate in Northern Ireland, Amandeep Bhogal, is a strong supporter of Brexit and has advocated for leaving the Customs Union, Single Market, European Court of Justice, Common Agricultural Policy and Common Fisheries Party.

Sinn Féin, Green Party, Alliance, SDLP and the two **Independent** candidates are all opposed to Brexit.

Sinn Féin argue that the only credible approach is for Northern Ireland to be designated special status within the EU and for the whole island of Ireland to remain within the EU⁶. They state that the EU has been flexible throughout negotiations and this position is achievable in Brexit negotiations (loc. cit.). **Sinn Féin** have published a series of documents outlining the case for a special status for

² DUP, (May 2019), ‘European Manifesto’, pp.1-9,

http://www.mydup.com/images/uploads/publications/European_manifesto_-_Final.pdf

³ TUV, (April 2019), ‘Beware of Customs Union’, <https://tuv.org.uk/beware-of-customs-union/>

⁴ UUP(May 2019), ‘2019 European Manifesto’, p.5,

<https://uup.org/assets/images/2019%20European%20Manifesto.pdf>

⁵ UKIP, (May 2019), ‘EU Manifesto 2019’, p.2, <https://www.ukip.org/pdf/EUManifesto2019-3.pdf>

⁶ Sinn Féin, (2019), ‘Sinn Féin Brexit’, <https://www.sinnfein.ie/brexit>

NI; how Ireland and the EU can fight the economic impact of Brexit and how a special status will protect farming and agri-food (loc. cit.).

The **Green Party Northern Ireland** have not yet released a European Election Manifesto. However, in previous press releases and manifestos they have stated how they believe a People's Vote, with an option to remain in the EU, is the only solution to current political stalemate⁷. The **Green Party** also support access to a single market for Northern Ireland, guarantees for the rights of EU citizens in the UK, maintaining existing environmental, human rights and workers' rights protections and ensuring free movement of people across the UK and Ireland.

In the **Alliance Party's** European Manifesto, they have outlined their commitment to reinforcing progressive values, supporting the work of the EU, protecting the NI economy, keeping borders open and securing a People's Vote⁸. If Brexit Happens, they have argued for a backstop as 'our insurance policy to protect the Good Friday Agreement, our economy and our open borders', however, they are primarily calling for a People's Vote with an option to remain in the EU on the ballot paper (ibid, pp.2-3).

The **SDLP** have not yet released a European Election Manifesto. However, they oppose Brexit and have encouraged people to sign a petition calling on Theresa May to stop the process by revoking Article 50⁹. The **SDLP** also rejects the idea of a "hard border" on the island of Ireland as Northern Ireland voted remain; and that vote should be considered "our people's vote"¹⁰. If Brexit does happen, the SDLP have stated that they support a backstop agreement¹¹.

Independent candidates, Neill McCann and Jane Morrice, are both strong pro-remain supporters and opposed to Brexit. Neither have published their European Election Manifestos online and no other information was available at the time of writing.

⁷ Green Party NI, (September 2018), 'People's Vote a Must Following Government Brexit Deal Defeat', <http://www.greenpartyni.org/peoples-vote-a-must-following-government-brexit-deal-defeat/>

⁸ Alliance Party, (May 2019), 'Alliance Party European Election Manifesto 2019', p.1

⁹ SDLP, (March 2019), 'McCrossan Urges People to Sign Petition to Revoke Article 50', <http://www.sdlp.ie/news/2019/mccrossan-urges-people-to-sign-petition-to-revoke-article-50/>

¹⁰ SDLP, (May 2019), 'Colum Eastwood: Brexit Can Still Be Stopped', <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-48206796>

¹¹ SDLP, (March 2019), 'Eastwood: Westminster Will Have to Accept the Backstop at Some Point', <http://www.sdlp.ie/news/2019/eastwood-westminster-will-have-to-accept-the-backstop-at-some-point/>

European Parliament Manifesto Pledges 2019 – Human Rights Law

Party	Northern Ireland Bill of Rights	Human Rights Act ¹²	European Convention on Human Rights / European Social Charter	EU Charter of Fundamental Rights
	N/A ¹³	N/A	N/A	N/A
	✗	✗	'Ireland to fully comply with all human rights obligations under the ECHR and Social Charter ¹⁴	Oppose any EU foreign policy that undermines the Charter or Universal Declaration of Human Rights ¹⁵
	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	✗	✗	✗	✗
	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	✗	✗	✗	✗
	✗	✗	✗	✗
	✗	✗	✗	✗
	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

¹² It is worth noting that **Sinn Féin, SDLP, Green Party** and **Alliance Party** signed a joint statement in 2018 calling for no diminution of rights as a result of Brexit, on the rights of people resident here and that the Good Friday Agreement would be protected. See full statement here: <https://sluggerotoole.com/2018/06/13/joint-statement-from-sinn-fein-sdlp-alliance-and-green-party-on-human-rights-post-brexit/>

¹³ For any candidate without a European Election manifesto online, N/A will be placed as this information has not been made accessible to the public. ✗ will be marked for those with a manifesto, but no mention of the topic in question.

¹⁴ Sinn Féin, (May 2019), 'European Election Manifesto 2019', p.13

¹⁵ Sinn Féin, (May 2019), 'European Election Manifesto 2019', p.14

European Parliament Manifesto Pledges 2019 – EU Funding

Party	EU Funding Mentioned	Pledge / Proposal
	N/A	N/A
	<p>PEACE and INTERREG IV</p> <p>EMFF¹⁶</p> <p>European Defence Fund</p> <p>Cross-Border Funding</p> <p>LEADER Funds¹⁷</p> <p>CAP¹⁸</p> <p>EU Fisheries Funding</p> <p>EU Transport Funding</p> <p>Regional Development Funding</p>	<p>Want continued funding and for both to be maintained</p> <p>Support securing special protections</p> <p>Opposed to this and highlight incompatibility with EU Treaties</p> <p>Priority that EU remains committed to continued funding</p> <p>Support continued access to LEADER Programmes' investment; particularly regarding supporting rural development</p> <p>In favour of continued access to CAP funding for farmers post-Brexit</p> <p>Support expanding EU Funding to help fisheries and protect environment</p> <p>In favour of funding for Western Rail Corridor and Western Arc from Derry-Cork</p> <p>Strongly oppose this being used to fund militarisation</p>
	N/A	N/A
	N/A	N/A
	<p>EU Cohesion Funds</p> <p>PEACE and INTERREG Funds</p> <p>Regional Transfers Funding</p>	<p>Post-Brexit, reallocated from EU and used as regional funding within UK</p> <p>Seek commitment to the co-design of new programmes and access to these post-Brexit</p> <p>Emphasis upon regional transfers rather than within England</p>

¹⁶ European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF)

¹⁷ Investment into Rural Development

¹⁸ Common Agricultural Policy (CAP)

	<p>European Social Fund and European Regional Development Fund</p> <p>UK Agricultural Bill</p> <p>Rural Development Funding</p> <p>EMFF</p>	<p>Advocate on behalf of recipients struggling with red tape and promote new funding mechanisms to build on financial support for community, voluntary and women’s sectors</p> <p>Support more funding certainty to local farm business to safeguard employment, UK self-sufficiency and high-quality food</p> <p>Want to ensure this is distributed fairly, especially to small, rural businesses</p> <p>Support creating a new fund maintaining current levels of funding and to be focused on growth rather than decline management</p>
	N/A	N/A
	×	×
	PEACE IV and Community Development Funding	Welcome commitment by British Government and EU to continue PEACE IV funding post-Brexit but must not be used as a bargaining chip or have the continuation linked to support for Withdrawal Agreement
	<p>EU Structural Fund</p> <p>Horizon 2020/Horizon Europe and Erasmus</p> <p>EU funding Gaps – CAP and Structural Fund</p> <p>EU Cohesion Funds</p>	<p>Support a special Agreement for NI to with renegotiated access</p> <p>Want NI to be given access to these competitive EU Funds and more rigorous assessment of impact of EU funding – particularly PEACE funding</p> <p>Call for funding gaps post-Brexit to be backfilled by UK Government, but not through Barnett Formula, as existing EU funding approach reflects higher needs of NI – particularly the proposed Shared Prosperity Fund which may replace Structural Funds</p> <p>State that NI is a net recipient of EU resources, need to ensure Barnett formula doesn’t leave NI unable to financially support economic productivity, inclusion of marginalised groups, farmers, apprentices and voluntary sector</p>
	N/A	N/A
	N/A	N/A

European Parliament Manifesto Pledges 2019: Citizenship –
Equality, Anti-Discrimination and Workers’ Rights

Party	Equality and Anti-Discrimination	Workers’ Rights
	N/A	N/A
	<p>Equality for Regions – particularly West, North and Border</p> <p>Incorporating social rights into EU legislation – e.g. right to housing, energy and water</p> <p>Support Irish Language Act in NI</p> <p>Legislation to be gender-proofed and disability-proofed to prevent negative impacts</p> <p>LGBT+ appropriate medical care and recognition of unions and families across the EU</p> <p>European Language Ombudsman to act as watchdog for states who engage in discrimination against a person’s language rights</p> <p>End gender discrimination and gender pay gap with effective enforcement mechanisms</p> <p>Support arms embargos against human rights violators and demand human rights safeguards are properly exercised to prevent murder of activists</p>	<p>Unemployment has dropped but insecure employment with low wages has risen – EU law currently prioritises corporate interests and single market over workers’ and trade union rights</p> <p>Want a binding ‘Social Progress Protocol’ to the EU Treaty to guarantee pay and employment conditions cannot be undermined</p> <p>Support for full employment based on high quality and stable jobs; a living wage; ending zero-hour contracting; mandatory trade union recognition and greater protection for workers through collective bargaining and defending the right to strike; access to well-funded and effective life-long learning and retraining; reversal of race-to-the-bottom with equal rights and protections for all workers</p>
	N/A	N/A
	N/A	N/A
	<p>Encourage a compassionate approach to refugees seeking refuge from religious persecution and other serious human rights abuses</p>	×

	N/A	N/A
	×	×
	×	<p>Brexit should not threaten existing workers' rights that have been developed through EU membership, e.g., rights for part-time workers, paid holiday entitlement and working time protection</p> <p>Support UK government pledge to protect workers' rights post-Brexit</p>
	<p>Committed to promoting gender equality and empowering women and girls in work, economic participation and decision-making</p> <p>EU must continue to play leading role in ensuring sustainable development, democracy, human rights, peace and security in the world</p>	Support enhancement of workers' rights
	N/A	N/A
	N/A	N/A

European Parliament Manifesto Pledges 2019 - Environment and Climate Change

Party	Environment and Climate Change
	N/A
	<p>Supportive of emergency manifesto on Climate Change, EU Strategy on Plastics and negotiating on the Single Use Plastic Directive</p> <p>Believe climate change is a crisis of under-regulated capitalism – allowing big polluters to turn a profit without taking into account the consequences on the planet</p> <p>Against the influence of corporate lobbyists and market-based solutions, such as carbon tax, that have failed to reduce emissions</p> <p>Call for protection of public services and environment from bad trade deals</p> <p>Support a CAP that allows farmers to be custodians of environment based on smaller-scale farming that encourages ecological development; to incentivize conservation, environmental protection and biodiversity</p> <p>Support for expanding EU Funding to help Irish fishing communities grow and protect the environment</p>
	N/A
	N/A
	<p>Support a balanced approach to driving agriculture and safeguarding the benefits of the environment</p> <p>View Brexit as an opportunity to deliver an environmental policy that works for Northern Ireland and treat farmers as the solution to improving the environment rather than the problem</p> <p>Supporting food being introduced in the UK, rather than imported, as a way of complimenting the environment by preventing the UK from outsourcing environmental responsibilities</p> <p>Ensure farmers are given greater access to education, financial support and sufficient time to adjust to tackling environmental challenges</p> <p>No mention of climate change</p>
	N/A
	X

 <p>Ulster Unionist Party For the Union</p>	<p>Support development of sustainable agriculture and land-usage policy that is good for nature and financially supports farmers</p> <p>Support a land-based payment system that recognises farmers as custodians of natural environment</p> <p>States future generations will judge for how we responded to global issues such as climate change – Brexit should not dilute or weaken existing environmental standards and immediate action is needed to plug gaps in protection post-Brexit</p>
	<p>Support promoting sustainable development, the protection of the environment and fighting climate change by investing in research</p> <p>Call for increased international climate and environmental cooperation is crucial to meet the Paris Agreement targeted and the Sustainable Development Goals</p> <p>Believe the EU must take global leadership in setting global ambitious targets and to reach these targets, they support fostering research and development in low emission technologies, infrastructure, clean energy production, energy efficiency, and a reduction of industry and transport emissions including aviation and shipping.</p> <p>State the EU should reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 55% by 2030</p>
	<p>N/A</p>
	<p>N/A</p>

